

BUSINESS NOTES AND TRADE NEWS

Cleveland Retailer Looks Forward to Broad Awakening of Industry in Spring.

THE discussion of business conditions and prospects by Victor W. Sincere of the Bailey Company of Cleveland, Ohio, which is printed in this column, was prepared in response to these inquiries:

Will the 1924 normal of prices ever be reached again?

Do prices indices of merchandise speak of undue inflation?

What is your view of the general trade outlook?

I shall try to give you my viewpoint as I see the situation, confined as closely as possible to the three questions asked. However, in advance of this, I might state that it is my opinion that the statement of any one in the retail industry as to the outlook for business next year must be based largely and almost fundamentally upon the outlook and possibilities of other industrial institutions, inasmuch as we are merely purveyors and distributors whose prosperity depends upon the well-being and profitableness outcome of industrial enterprises. Therefore with this premise, I answer the questions as follows:

It is my opinion that the normal prices of 1914 will not be reached, at least during this period of changing standards, and that there is no doubt seriously whether we will ever see a return to the prices of that year.

It is my opinion that through depreciation and shrinkages of inventories through preceding periods the retail prices have reached a normal standard, based upon present wholesale prices of commodities, and that this unit of production is now in a position of initiation, nor is it subject to the same violent price changes it was subject to throughout the last two years.

I believe it is conceded that since a year ago, through the process of cut price sales and restrictions in purchases, the standard retail stores in the United States have so maneuvered their stocks as to bring them into line in the open market to-day of all the commodities and that the retail prices on such commodities are bearing merely their normal gross percentage of markup in accordance with the expense requirements and local influences in each city. This, coupled with the keen competition between merchants has made for more persistent standards of merchandising and a safer method of procedure by the merchants in their own operations, as well as in their relationship to the wholesaler.

I believe that an examination of the records of the retail industry will disclose an excess in the number of transactions over the year past, due to the reduction in trading and the greater decreased average amount of each transaction prevents a consequent increase in sales over the sales of that time.

I believe that economies are being practiced and that the consumer is extending to the limit the time of purchasing, but, inasmuch as the retailers are sellers of the necessities of life, it is my opinion that the time of delivery, set-up and industrial conditions generally begin to improve the retailer will feel the results immediately in the same ratio.

From reports we are receiving through natural channels which we have for the purpose we are convinced that industry is beginning to awaken, that consumer is daily increasing and that the spring awakening is a broad awakening in business, both industrially and in the retail trade, and while we do not look forward to a great rush of business, we are sanguine enough to believe that the worst of the condition is behind us.

VICTOR W. SINCERE.

AMONG THE MERCHANTS.

Silk Syndicate Sends Reply.

In answer to a cable from prominent silk men of this city to the Imperial Raw Silk Syndicate and asking for a release of part of its raw silk holdings, a cable received yesterday stated that about half of the syndicate holdings had been released and would be returned to the end of February at buyers' options. The remainder of the holdings, according to the cable, possibly would not be disposed of for considerable time and would be divided into several lots and sold at opportune periods.

Prices of Raw Silk Advance.

Cables from Japan received yesterday declared that the raw silk market was fairly active and that its prices had an upward tendency. Double extra A and Extra A were quoted at \$2,080 per pound in American exchange, being \$5.21 per pound above last week's quotation. Business was done at those prices. In the local market manufacturers are reported as operating conservatively. An increasing tendency to buy more actively, however, is noticeable, particularly true with regard to mercantile.

Report Linen Sale Progress.

Linen, according to dealers, is getting a very fair share of this year's Christmas trade. Last minute rush by the public for tablecloths, napkins and handkerchiefs is proving a welcome boom to the linen wholesalers to increase the credit size of their ledgers before the winter. John D. Johnson's stocks generally are reported as low, with deliveries greatly delayed. The latter phase of the situation is said to be causing many cancellations of orders because demand is for immediate delivery. Prices have shown no change in the last week.

Gray Goods Quiet.

Little change was noticeable in yesterday's local gray goods market. Some limited firm following a slight upward trend in cotton, but buyers were apparently unwilling to commit themselves to advanced buying. Sales of printcloths of 33½ inch, 64-69s and 29 inch, 68-72s were reported at 8% and 9% cents respectively. Sheetings of 615 yard were bid at 6½ cents.

In the burlesque market some business was done, but little buying of any size was recorded. Cables from Calcutta reported the dock strike as settled and prices were reported as generally unchanged.

Small Holiday Outerwear Buying.

Although outerwear salesmen coming in from the road report little actual business in outerwear being done, the opinion that active early spring buying of it will begin after the turn of the year prevails. Many stocks are reported as small, which indicates, according to the salesmen, that the 1924 business should show a very decided increase compared with that of 1921, when the carry over was larger than it had been in many years. Contrary to the situation existing in most other lines of business, outerwear manufacturers and retailers have been able to liquidate their stocks, which should put them in line for quantity buying on a large scale when the spring season opens up.

Urge Strapping Packing System.

In order to eliminate the great waste incurred by loss and damage to freight

shipments, due to improper packing, the Merchants Association urges the adoption of the strapping system of packing. The cost of goods lost from packing, when summarized, is said to have exceeded \$10,000,000 yearly. Details of the system are as follows: So-called concealed losses are practically eliminated by the use of wire or steel binding; a protected case is safer a shipper's packing room or in a consignee's receiving department, and if it is exposed to the elements, there would be a corresponding reduction in friction with the public over the adjustment of such claims.

New Binoculars on Market.

The smallest binocular ever manufactured has been put on the market and is proving popular as a Christmas gift for men. The instrument is of very pocket size and of four power reading. It is easily adjustable for any focal length and, in addition to having all the sightline advantages of larger binoculars, sells at low prices. It is of German make.

SHORT TERM NOTES.

Date Due Bid Asked.

AhmCo of Am. .7 Nov. 1925 100% 100%

AmtCottonOil .6 Sept. 2, 24 95% 94%

AmtTele .7 Feb. 1922 100% 100%

AmtTele .7 Nov. 1925 100% 100%

AnaCocaCap .8 Nov. 1925 97% 97%

AnaCocaCap .7 Jan. 1926 97% 97%

AngAmOil Ltd. .7 April 1926 100% 100%

Armour & Co .7 July 15, '20 102% 102%

BellFed of Can. .7 April 1926 100% 100%

BellFed of Can. .7 April 1926 100% 100%